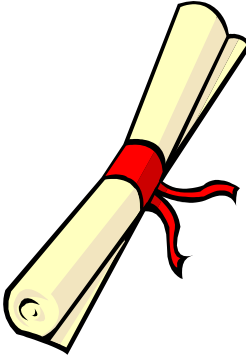


FIRE SAFETY GUIDELINES FOR ALL-NIGHT GRAD / AFTER-PROM EVENTS



County of Fairfax, Virginia Fire and Rescue Department Fire Prevention Division

Inspections Branch
4100 Chain Bridge Road - 2nd Floor
Fairfax, Virginia 22030

The All-Night Grad/After-Prom Inspector for
your event can be reached at: 703-246-4849



The following fire safety guidelines have been compiled to assist organizers in planning and safely implementing an all-night grad/after-prom event located in Fairfax County while meeting the intent of the Virginia Statewide Fire Prevention Code. The intent of the Fire Prevention Code is to safeguard life and property from the hazards of fire and explosion. The Fairfax County Fire Prevention Division has outlined the following fire prevention code categories to help identify the methods and means to meet the intent of the Fire Prevention Code. The goal of the Fire Prevention Division is to ensure life safety and fire prevention through review and approval of a facility layout and emergency plan, followed by facility and site inspections the day of your event. All of our efforts on this front should result in a SAFE, FUN and SUCCESSFUL all-night grad/after-prom event for the class of 2003.

❑ **APPROVALS - Virginia Statewide Fire Prevention Code**

- F-601.4 - Approval shall be obtained from the fire code official for the operation or occupancy of a place of assembly. A Fire Prevention Code Permit (FPCP) is required.
- F-402.3 - Approval shall be obtained from the fire code official for the use of any open flame device or burning of any candle(s) in connection with any public meeting or gathering for the purpose of entertainment, amusement, or recreation. Although a permit is not required, Fire Marshal approval is required for each event. Request for approval can be included in the written portion of the Facility Layout & Emergency Plan.
- F-2001.2 - Approval shall be obtained from the fire code official for the erection, use, or maintenance of any air-supported structure or tent exceeding 900 square feet and with an occupant load of greater than 50 persons. FPCP is required. Inflatable amusement devices are generally not considered to be in this category.
- **Request for approval for any of the above requirements shall be made in writing by the person in charge of the event (committee chairperson).** This can be done by completing and submitting the special Fire Prevention Code Permit application for All-night Grad/After prom events. If the application is approved, the required permit(s) will be issued at the time of the facility and site inspection the day of the event information and guidelines on the requirements for approval. Permit and inspection fees are waived for events in Fairfax County.

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❑ FACILITY LAYOUT & EMERGENCY PLAN

APPROVAL FOR THE OPERATION OF AN ALL-NIGHT GRAD/AFTER-PROM EVENT IS A TWO-PART PROCESS:

- **First**, the submittal of a completed facility layout (floor plan) and written emergency plan is required. The following are minimum components that satisfy the plan submittal requirement. Keep the plan as simple as possible. Two copies of this written plan and facility layout shall be submitted at least **30 days** prior to the event for approval by the event inspector.

THE WRITTEN EMERGENCY PLAN SHALL INCLUDE:

- Complete contact information for the event committee chairperson including alternate contact(s) in case that person can not be reached. Additionally, contact information for the person(s) responsible for decorative materials, special effects and fire safety/security should also be provided. This is VERY important 😊
- The date(s) & time(s) of the event(s), name of the school having or sponsoring the event, the name and address of the event facility, the approximate completion time for set-up the day of the event, and a point of contact at the event facility for the inspection.
- The approximate number of attendees and parents/facility staff.
- Evacuation procedures (To be distributed to all parents & staff)
- Procedure for accounting for all occupants after an evacuation or emergency.
- Procedure for reporting a fire or other emergency.
- Means of communication available to summon help if needed.
- Documentation certifying the treatment of combustible decorative materials with an approved fire- or flame-retardant product and/or documentation of fire- or flame-retardant properties for factory/manufacturer treated decorative materials. Provide a list of all decorative material types used for the event. (See Decorative Materials section)

THE FACILITY LAYOUT (FLOOR PLAN) SHALL INCLUDE:

- Locations of ALL exits (clearly marked).
- Locations of corridors, pathways and aisles leading to ALL exits (clearly marked).
- Primary and secondary evacuation routes. (clearly distinguishable)
- Locations of ALL accessible/wheel chair exits (clearly marked)
- All entrances (including the main entrance to the event, entrances not used for the event and entrances readily available for emergency use by ambulance or police).
- Evacuation staging or gathering area(s) (clearly marked)
- Locations of ALL portable fire extinguishers (clearly marked)
- Locations of ALL fire alarm pull stations (clearly marked)
- Location of the fire alarm panel (clearly marked)
- Location of ALL telephones (clearly marked)
- All planned activity areas (brief description)
- Locations of tables & chairs and all significant decorative displays.
- Location(s) of portable power equipment (such as a generator) introducing temporary power to or into the building for the event.

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KEY POINTS FOR FIRE SAFETY:

- Ensure that all adult attendants of the event are trained in the duties to be performed in case of fire, panic or other emergency, including the operation of portable fire extinguishers, sounding or activating the fire alarm, calling 911, and evacuation of attendees. This typically requires discussion and training in advance of the event.
- A copy of the facility layout and emergency plan **shall** be distributed to all key facility and event staff. Emergency procedures and evacuation plans should be reviewed and discussed with all facility and event staff to identify the procedures and actions to be taken in the case of fire, power outages or other emergencies requiring immediate action.
- A minimum of one adult shall supervise each activity area and shall perform appropriate duties in case of fire, panic or other emergency while the party is in progress. **The attendant shall have a working flashlight.**

Please include a self-addressed postage paid envelope for the return of a copy of any plan submitted. An approved copy of the plan shall be required on location at the facility for the duration of the event.

- **Second**, Facility and site inspections will be conducted the day of the event by an inspector from the fire prevention division finalizing approval. Additionally, all required permits will be issued upon completion of the inspection signifying final approval. The purpose of this inspection is ascertain and cause to be corrected any conditions liable to cause fire, contribute to the spread of fire, interfere with fire fighting operations or endanger life (F-109.1 SFPC). Events are subject to spot inspection.
 - These inspections are automatically scheduled upon approval of the facility layout & emergency plan.
 - As mentioned previously, a copy of an approved facility layout and emergency plan will be required at the event location and shall be available for inspection and reference. It is strongly suggested that the event committee chairperson hand off the approved copy of the facility layout and emergency plan to a responsible person (parent) who will be at the facility for event set-up and inspection. Last year, most of the event planners were not on location for inspection (they were attending graduation). Several “junior” parents had to handle the inspection process. So familiarize the other parents involved with set up with the guidelines.
 - Facilities are not only inspected for the safe set-up and operation of an all-night grad/after-prom event, but also for over all life safety and fire prevention. Be sure to determine that your facility is completely checked for safety to avoid any last minute problems. Example: if the event facility is required to have a fire alarm system, and that system is broken or out of service, you may not be able to have the event. So check out the big picture (the entire facility). It is strongly recommended you inspect the facility before the day of event to ensure all required components and systems are in place and functioning properly.

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❑ FIRE DEPARTMENT ACCESS

- Emergency vehicle access to the building or event facility is paramount in the event of a fire, medical emergency, or other emergency.
- If the facility has Fairfax County designated and approved fire lanes, it is unlawful to park or obstruct such designated areas. Consider this when planning for parking and advise all attendees to observe fire lane regulations to avoid getting a ticket and/or having a vehicle towed.
- If the building or party facility does not have fire lanes, consider emergency vehicle access in your planning process.
- Parking is prohibited within 15' of a fire hydrant.
- Do not obstruct the building address, any fire hydrant, or any fire department connection from view or access.

❑ FIRE PROTECTION EQUIPMENT

- F-504.1 - All fire protection systems shall be maintained in an operative condition at all times. This includes all smoke detection, fire alarm, fire sprinkler, commercial kitchen hood suppression, and fire extinguishers.
- If the facility has a fire sprinkler system and/or a fire alarm system, be certain the fire protection system(s) is functional. In the event of a system activation or problem, will there be someone on site that can assist you? If not, obtain contact information for somebody that can assist.
- If the facility is used for food preparation, all cooking appliances shall be protected under an approved commercial kitchen exhaust system and have fire suppression as required.
- Have access to fire extinguishers and be familiar with the operation and use of each.
- Consider a training class on the use of fire extinguishers in advance of the event.
- All fire protection system equipment and warning devices such as fire alarm panel(s), fire sprinkler heads, fire department hose connections, pull stations, audible and visual alarm devices (horns and strobes), and fire extinguishers shall not be obstructed from view or operation by any decorative material, displays or storage.

❑ EXITS & EVACUATION ROUTES

- F-603.1 - All means of egress devices and safeguards shall be maintained in good working order.
- F-606.1 - An exit shall not be utilized for any purpose that interferes with its function as a means of egress, except as otherwise approved.
- Exits shall be properly maintained, identified, visible, in proper working condition at all times, and be available for immediate utilization.

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❑ EXITS & EVACUATION ROUTES (continued)

- The following requirements regarding exits and evacuation routes shall be adhered to at all times:
 - F-608.1 - All exit doors shall be readily openable from the side from which egress is to be made without a key, or special knowledge or effort.
 - **LOCKED OR CHAINED EXIT DOORS ARE PROHIBITED.**
 - Exits and exit corridors are to remain free of obstructions, tables and chairs, displays, storage and/or persons, and shall be accessible at all times.
 - All aisles shall have a minimum required clear width of 44 inches, and shall be maintained clear for the duration of the event.
 - All exit signs shall be illuminated and visible. Emergency lighting provided with the facility shall be operational.
 - Maintain a 7-foot clearance from the top inside of balloon arches (and other tunnel type entryways) to the floor.

❑ ELECTRICAL SAFETY

- F-310.1 - All identified electrical hazards shall be abated. The best approach to this subject is simply not to create an electrical hazard.
- All holiday light string, other lighting decorations, and utilized electrical appliances shall be listed by a recognized testing laboratory such as Underwriters Laboratories (UL) or Factory Mutual (FM)
- Listed holiday string-of-lights and other lighting decorations may be used in other decorative applications as long as contact is not made with any combustible material (treated or untreated).
- Lights with loose sockets, frayed or bare wires, and lights that produce excessive heat or other dangerous conditions shall be prohibited.
- Extension cords will only be approved on a location-to-location basis. Extension cords must be of the heavy duty type (typically orange or black commercial grade), be no longer than 25 feet, shall not be plugged together to make longer cords, and shall not be overloaded. Extension cords with excessive physical damage and/or frayed or bare wires shall be prohibited. Extension cords shall NOT be pinched, taped to walls or floors, extended through walls, ceilings, or under doors or floor coverings. Avoid extension cord tripping hazards.
- Approved surge protected multi-plug power strips are recommended and shall not be piggy-backed (one power strip plugged into another power strip)

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❑ DECORATIONS & DECORATIVE MATERIAL

- F-306.1 - All decorative materials shall either be non-combustible or flame-resistant.
- F-306.2 - Approval shall be required if burlap, fish netting or other similar material is to be suspended from the ceiling of any building. If approval is given for the suspension of materials from the ceiling, no more than 10% of the ceiling area can be covered. Additionally, suspended decorative materials shall not interfere with the operation of any fire protection system.
- All combustible decorations shall be treated with an approved fire- or flame-retardant product, and retreated as often as necessary to maintain the flame-retardant effect.
- The person providing the fire- or flame-retardant treatment of decorative materials shall provide to the fire marshal (as a part of the written emergency plan) documentation certifying that such treatment was performed. This documentation shall indicate the date of treatment, the item or material treated, the name and the quantity of the product used, and the method of application. (See attached “***Documentation for Treatment of Decorative Materials***” form)
- Treat materials with fire-retardant before painting.
- Lamination of wall hangings is acceptable.
- Cornstalks, hay bales, stacks of newspapers or like materials that cannot be made fire- or flame-retardant are prohibited inside the facility. Bulk-type natural materials typically cannot be adequately treated with a fire- or flame-retardant product.
- In the written plan submittal, include descriptions of any displays or decorations that require the use of electrical wiring, lighting, or special lighting and sound effects.
- No decorations shall be hung from any fire protection devices. (i.e., sprinkler heads, emergency lighting, fire alarming equipment).
- Cut greenery shall be permitted provided it has been treated and certified with an approved fire- or flame-retardant product, and artificial greenery shall be of the approved fire- or flame-retardant variety.
- **NOTICE:** Inspectors may conduct a field flame-spread or combustibility test if decorative materials do not appear to comply with the fire prevention code. This test is conducted using a small swatch / sample of material taken from an inconspicuous part of a decorative display.

❑ FIRE RETARDANT PRODUCTS: The following fire-retardant products are available for use on decorative materials that require such treatment: (Search the internet for these products)

- Inspecta-Shield
- No-Char - Fire Preventor
- No-Burn Fire Retardant
- Save the original container of commercially purchased fire-retardant products.
- Save the wrappings of containers of commercially purchased decorations for proof of flame-resistant properties.
- Always follow the manufactures instructions for the application the product, and ensure the correct product is used on the appropriate material.
- Obtain, and have available, material safety data sheets (MSDS) for all fire-retardant products.

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❑ OPEN FLAME & SMOKING

- F-402.3 - Approval shall be obtained for the use of any open flame device(s) or burning of a candle or candles in connection with any public meeting or gathering for the purpose of entertainment, amusement, or recreation.
- Open flames may be used if self-contained (such as luminaries and tiki torches), and if used outside of the building with sufficient clearance from other combustible material and located 25 feet from the building.
- The use of portable canned heat, such as Sterno, can be used for warming foods provided the heating arrangement is located a minimum of 15 feet away from any decorative materials, constantly attended and a fire extinguisher is provided.
- The use of candles is permitted provided protective globes are in place, the candle is in a stable base, not located in areas where occupants stand or congregate, or in any aisle or exit and located a minimum of 15 feet away from any decorative materials. These arrangements are typically permitted only in the center of tables where occupants sit and there is no immediate ignition hazard.
- Smoking shall only be permitted in approved areas. Final approval for the use of any open flame or candle, and any designated smoking area is subject to final fire marshal field inspection.

❑ SPECIAL EFFECTS

- Vapor or smoke producing effects, such as smoke machines and dry ice, are not permitted due to the possibility of a fire alarm activation, obscuring of exits and exit signs, and the possibility of increased panic in an emergency.
- Strobe effects are allowed if the strobe is terminated when music is stopped. In the event of a fire alarm activation or any emergency, a plan shall be in place to immediately stop the music and all audio-visual special effects. Include descriptions of the components used for constructing the displays and decorations,

❑ COOKING SAFETY

- Outdoor grilling shall be located 15 feet away from building and away from any exit discharge, a fire extinguisher shall be provided, and if propane is used as the fuel, it shall be protected from damage and secured in place.
- Do not place combustible materials on or too close to the tops of stoves or inside ovens.

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Documentation for Treatment of Decorative Materials

The following information is provided for the flame- or fire-retardant treatment of decorative materials used for All-night Grad / After-prom events in Fairfax County, Virginia.

1) Material(s) Treated (Type / Description):

2) Date of Treatment:

3) Location of Treated Material(s) During Event:

4) Name of Flame- or Fire-Retardant Product Used:

5) Application Method and Approximate Quantity Used:

IMPORTANT: Attach (staple) a sample of the treated material(s) to this documentation. A minimum of a 4"x 6" swatch / sample shall be provided.

The above listed decorative material(s) is treated in accordance with the instructions provided with the flame- or fire-retardant product listed in item 4, and is certified as such by the following person:

Printed Name

Signature